

NOTES FROM THE:

Chief for Enlisted Matters

The Enlisted Assignment System—How to Make it Work for You!
by MSgt Jon Gauld

The objective of the enlisted assignment process is to put faces into spaces. Your current assignment happened because of a fair enlisted assignment system. Unfortunately, many of us do not clearly understand our assignment opportunities and how to take advantage of them. Remember, the more you know, the better you can participate in the process. This is your assignment system. The purpose of this article is to give you information on how the process works and to give you tools to enhance your ability to participate in the process. Before we get into the meat and potatoes, I'll tell you about some recent enhancements to the assignment process.

First of all, AFSCs 6F0X1 and 6F1X1 merged on 31 October 1999 and all enlisted personnel now hold AFSC 6F0X1. The Enlisted Assignment Home Page has a new layout and offers one-stop shopping with easy access to categories such as Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), Assignment Program Information, EQUAL Listings and the new Assignment Management System (AMS). AMS requires you to establish a password and will allow you to update your assignment preferences, volunteer for an EQUAL Plus job, or receive a real-time Report on Individual Personnel (RIP). Please take some time to visit us at <http://afas.afpc.randolph.af.mil/enlisted/enlisted.htm>.

Due to space limitations, I'll group the enlisted assignment processes into four areas: Overseas Assignments, CONUS returnee assignments, EQUAL Plus Special Duty, and Special Assignment Programs. It is important to note that worldwide Air Force manning percentages determine which MAJCOMs will receive allocations or will be entitled to fill a requirement. This concept is also referred to as Command of Entitlement.

Overseas (rotational) assignments drive the entire enlisted assignment process and are advertised four times a year via the EQUAL listing. It is important to note that short tour volunteers are selected before extended long tour and standard long tour volunteers. Members assigned overseas are in the first priority group and are given priority for a Consecutive Overseas Tour (COT) if their DEROS is in the same reporting month or up to two months prior to the RNLT. Members assigned to the CONUS are in the second group and priority is given to the volunteer with the greatest TOS. The overseas assignment cycle will create vacancies/requirements at CONUS locations.

CONUS requirements are filled primarily by personnel returning from overseas at DEROS. MAJCOMs receive allocations four times a year and determine where to place their allocations.

Requirements are advertised through EQUAL on a one-for-one basis. There are no extra assignments and returning members will match to one of the advertised requirements even if they do not update their preferences. NOTE: Members of a military couple returning from overseas do not participate in the EQUAL returnee process and are manually matched to a join spouse location based on Air Force requirements. Overseas returnees are prioritized into three groups based on their current tour length. Dependent restricted tour returnees (Korea) will choose first, followed by individuals serving an unaccompanied tour of 17 months or less (Turkey, Iceland, Guam and the Azores). The final category includes members returning from tours of 18 months or more (regardless of the accompanied status). Within each group, members are prioritized by the number of previous short tours served, tour extensions of 6 or 12 months or more (short and long tours respectively), DOR, TAFMSD.

EQUAL Plus special duty assignments are advertised to fill short-notice or unique job qualification requirements. The most common EQUAL plus jobs for enlisted personnel in AFSC 6F0X1 are recruiting support jobs and joint/departmental assignments (DoD, NATO, etc.). It is important to note that EQUAL Plus ads are advertised for a specific grade and you can increase your chances of being selected for a job by only volunteering for jobs in your current or projected grade. Qualifications and application requirements are listed on each advertisement. The most common method is to apply via the AF Form 392 by updating the job number in your CSS PC-3 or AMS systems. Other jobs will require a formal application and commander recommendation.

You can also use several Special Assignment Programs to request the following types of assignments: CONUS Assignment Exchange (SWAP), Permissive, Join Spouse, Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP), Humanitarian Reassignment, Voluntary Enlisted CONUS Assignment Program (VECAP), Voluntary Stabilized Base Assignment Program (VSBAP), and Homebasing/Follow-on. Your MFP is your focal point for assignment questions and application requirements.

As you finish this article, I hope you have a better understanding of the enlisted assignment system and how it equally and fairly selects our enlisted force for their jobs. Keep in mind, every time we are asked to manipulate or change this process, we take a little bit of the fairness out of the system. The system will work—if you let it.